1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

had one son who died unmarried. The heir of Mpezeni I next after Nsingu was, therefore, the eldest son of the third wife in segment 10. This man's position in segment 10 was, therefore, equivalent to that of the eldest son of the second wife in segment 14, who was the second heir in that segment. Of these two second heirs, the latter, in the less important segment, was able to establish himself as the chief of county 17 whereas the former, in the more important segment, succeeded merely in becoming a village headman. Similarly, some lieutenants managed to become chiefs, others of comparable status did not. Wiese mentions six lieutenants by name. One of these became a chief, the other five did not. The segments of two other lieutenants, not mentioned by Wiese, became county segments and one other lieutenant became chief in the county of his lady's segment.

The evidence, therefore, suggests that we must look upon this transition from one system to another as no simple procedure by which indigenous forms of organization are taken over largely unchanged by a colonial administration. The change from an isolated expanding system based on warfare to a large-scale quasi-static system based on subsistence production and migratory labour provided opportunities for advancement for those who could adapt themselves more quickly than their neighbours. In one sense the really significant change came not in 1898 but in the 1920s, when the pattern of alignment became fixed. In the intervening period Ngoni society was still fluid, and an ambitious man had hope of securing advancement even as he had in the old days before the conquest, even though that advancement was achieved by different means and in a different context. It was after the twelve counties had been fixed, when it became clear that no more chiefs were to be made, that social mobility declined. With a rapidly changing external environment it was unlikely that this static condition would last, and with the growth of the Native Authority bureaucracy a new opening presented itself. Recently there are indications that further openings for the ambitious are being provided in the formation of parishes and in other schemes of rural development. But there are no new chiefs, even as there are no new plumed warriors for them to lead in battle or on whose behalf they can intercede with the tribal ancestors. Leadership in a society of half-peasants, half-proletarians, is based on other interests.

The salaries of chiefs are determined at an annual budget meeting held by the District Officer and attended by the chiefs and a few other men. The general outline of the tribal budget is suggested by the Administration, but on items of interest, such as

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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personal emoluments, there is usually some discussion. Thus the relative amounts paid to each chief provide us with some indication of the importance attached to him by the Administration and his colleagues. The salaries paid in 1946 are set out in Table VI together with the number of villages in each county in 1938, the last year for which I have that information.

TABLE VI. SALARIES OF CHIEFS AND VILLAGES IN THEIR COUNTIES

County segment	*Number of villages in county, 1938*	*Salary of county chief in £s per annum, 1946*
10	87	120 (*a*)
14	101	97½
4	88	82½
11	77	67½
12	42	52½
17	35	37½
13	30	27 (*b*)
15	28	27 (*b*)
9	19	30
16	19	30
Total	526	571½
Mean	52.6	57.15

(*a*) Paramount Chief.
(*b*) Calculated from monthly rate. Both these chieftainships were vacant for part of 1946.

It will be seen that the amount of a minor chief's salary is closely correlated with the number of villages in his county. The chiefs of counties 13 and 15 appear to be underpaid in relation to the number of their villages, and this may be related to efforts which the Administration had been making about that time to eliminate these two chieftainships and to amalgamate their chiefdoms with others. This arrangement also conforms to the alignment of segments. The Paramount Chief is in charge of county 10 but he is also head of primal segment 4 which includes all the others, and it is therefore appropriate that he should be paid most. Chief 14 is

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FRS Ngoni FRS
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paid more than 17, as befits the fact that segment 14 contains segment 17, and similarly 11 is paid more than 16.

From another point of view we see that the sizes of the counties, in terms of the number of villages, are in accord with the segmentary alignment, although here we have to remember that we are dealing not with the county segments, residual or primal, but with the counties themselves, each containing villages from many segments. Yet despite this complication, it remains true that the status of a chief, as measured by the number of villages he controls, is in conformity with his position in the segmentary residential system. It may well be that during the early administrative period fortune favoured those leaders whose *de facto* following was in agreement with their position in the old political system. The use of hereditary names emphasizes the connexion of the minor chiefs of to-day with the pre-conquest State and to some extent reflects their traditional alignment. Apart from county 16, where the hereditary name changed when a chief was succeeded by his brother, all the hereditary names refer to the first holders of the chieftainship, though not necessarily to the first leader of the county segment. Thus, for example, segment 5 was founded by Lomapela, brother of Zwangendaba. When the British Administration began, segment 5 was led by Zulu, a son's son of Lomapela. Zulu was recognised as a chief by the Administration, and the name Zulu has been adopted by the two chiefs, his sons, who have succeeded in turn. Similarly, segment 15 was founded for the lady Kukuya Kapili twala, a wife of Ntutu Mpeseni I. Her eldest son, Sayili, was recognised by the Administration as a chief, and this name has been inherited by his son and son's son who have succeeded him as county chief.

We should not infer from the conformity between the position of chiefs in modern and traditional terms that the present system is maintained solely by values surviving from before the conquest. This is plainly not the case. Our point here is that in this particular respect traditional values do not clash with those of the new order.

6. *Counties as territorial units*

We have seen that during the period of migration there were no lasting boundaries, and that political allegiance outlasted changes in geographical location. This state of affairs continued for some time after the conquest. The moves that were made were much shorter than in previous times, but the same principle applied. From 1900 to 1930 many villages moved from one site to another as land was alienated to Whites, as the boundaries of proposed

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FRS Ngoni FRS
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TABLE VIII. PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS TO BE PAID BY NGONI NATIVE TREASURY, 1949

Description of post	Number of posts	Mean annual salary in £s, to nearest £
Chief	10	72
Councillor	4	60
Treasury clerk	2½(a)	57
Artisan	2	48
Court clerk	10	25
Messenger	22	25
Assessor	20	24
School attendance officer	5	24
Road foreman	2	24
Office boy	1	24
Mail runner	2	18
Nursery keeper (fruit trees)	1	15
School matron	6	9(b)
Total number of full-time posts	87½	

(a) One tax-collecting clerk whose work was in Fort Jameson Township was paid jointly by the Ngoni and Cewa Native Treasuries.
(b) Including £1½ contributed by missions.

This table is based on the approved estimates for 1949 and it is possible that not all the posts were filled. In previous years all posts had been filled without difficulty, except for the matrons.
The emoluments shown here do not include allowances paid for bicycles, lorry fares, and rent-free housing available for some employees.
Not included in the table are the sums paid to a few employees at the Demonstration Farm, and the provision made for 240 man-months of casual labour on the roads at 25s. a month and 360 man-days of carrier labour at 10d. a day.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FRS Ngoni FRS

hospitality involved both planning and expense. The Paramount's wife had to keep enough food stocks on hand not only to feed her own large family and household, but also to be able to respond to expected and unexpected guests. The Paramount's personal annual salary at that time was £80, out of which he had to keep his family and household in food and clothes and school fees, and pay for the upkeep of his house. The bulk of the cereals and some of the beans and other vegetables used in his house came from his fields worked by hired labour. Another source of food supply was the market 'custom', a small toll levied on the produce sold in the weekly market, which was paid chiefly in kind and put in the storehouses on the Paramount's *boma* to be used to feed his guests.[1]

The Paramount not only gave food and drink to the expected and unexpected visitors to the royal village. From time to time he gave a feast to which the Christians of the congregation of the mission church were invited, as on one New Year's Day when I was staying there. He gave a feast to all the neighbourhood on the occasion of his daughter's wedding. From time to time he invited all his people to dance *ligoho* or *ngoma* at the royal village and provided beer for all and food for the *akamnumo* and the chiefs and their wives. The organization of these big feasts demanded planning on a generous scale and a large outlay in maize for porridge and meat for relish. No feast at the Paramount's village was complete without meat enough to satisfy everyone.

The visitors, the feasts, the dances, all had their focal point in the royal residence in the royal village. There were two other focal points in the village where large numbers of people came regularly, and made the place where the Paramount lived a centre which brought his people together and brought him before them as their ruler. These were the market and the court-house which also housed his offices.

Before 1939 the market in the royal village was unique in the area for its size and the service which it rendered to the countryside. At any one time on a Saturday there would be five to 1,000 people present. In 1938 a second market was opened by the Paramount at Naipe at the southern end of his territory. They were definitely his markets in that he allotted space for them; fixed the days on which they were held; controlled the policing of the market and the strangers' huts where sellers arriving overnight could sleep; fixed the prices according to seasonal variations in supply; and, as we have seen, collected 'custom' in lieu of rents for sites. The market at Mapanga served an area extending roughly 15 miles to the east, 15 to the west and 10 miles to the north and south. It stretched in the east to below the escarpment whence came bamboo and

[1] An average weekly amount of custom accrued over several weeks was 10s. in cash, and a quantity of bananas, sugar-cane, vegetables and cereals amounting to two sackfuls and sometimes three. The cash was levied on meat, 1s. 9d. per cow, 1s. 6d. per goat or pig, and on mats, baskets, etc. at roughly 1d. in the 1s.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

to the method of rearing calves by letting them take all the milk they wanted, and partly to the practice of letting the herd-boys have the rest. In villages under a *mukamanene* of a Swazi clan, who had a wife in his big house also of a Swazi clan, the consumption of milk was to some extent organised. These senior women saw that the herd-boys brought them a certain amount of milk each day, and they gave it to young children or invalids, and made some into *amasi*.

Another practice which restricted the use of meat and milk as regular items of diet was that the building up of the herds was regarded as a primary responsibility of the owners and guardians of cattle. Hence calves were given milk, which in western countries would be drawn off for human use, and the killing of beasts, unless they were sick, was restricted to selling the meat for cash or using it in ritual. One of the embarrassments suffered by an anthropologist was being presented with a beast by people who hardly ever killed one for their own use. It was true that a general share-out took place when the beast was killed, but it was none the less one beast fewer in the herd, and it was the maintenance and increase of the herds which was the cattle-owners' chief concern.

This emphasis on numbers rather than quality, which caused so much misunderstanding between government departments and cattle-owners, was closely related to the forms of exchange in cattle. Formerly cattle were handed over either as *lobola* or as penalties for the infringement of laws. Both these forms of transfer continued, but there were additional demands which cattle-owners or potential owners had to be aware of in watching the increase or diminution of their herds. One characteristic of these modern forms of exchange was the ready convertibility of cattle into cash and of cash into cattle. We have seen how young men away at work sent money back to their fathers or fathers' brothers to buy cattle. We have seen too how the possession of cattle made it possible to sell a beast and obtain cash for various purposes, and the proximity of markets where there were butchers' stalls encouraged this sale of cattle.

One of the most frequent reasons for the conversion of cattle into cash was for the purpose of hiring labour. We saw in Chapter I of this section how Lopazi Nzunga killed cattle to feed the men who carried bricks and cement for his brother's tomb and sold another beast to pay wages to the bricklayers. The traditional way of paying labourers had been by feeding them with meat, and the modern method was to pay them cash wages and to find the money for it by the sale of cattle. Such labour could be for cultivating, house-building, fence-building, road-making and other local work. The possession of cattle which were easily convertible into cash made possible this payment of labour, and this relationship between the role of cattle-owner and the role of employer of labour was common.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

round to protect the cow and calf, until they were strong enough to go back to the kraal.

The intricate system of ownership of cattle, including the relation between a house and a herd, and between certain herds and the spirits of former great people, was part of a herd-boy's background knowledge. He listened at the kraal gate to the men discussing questions of ownership. When a decision was taken to kill a beast, or sell one, or to transfer one or more at a marriage, or to hand over a beast in payment of a fine, the senior boys knew which group of beasts in the kraal must be driven out to be looked over in order that a selection could be made by the man concerned.

The Ngoni classified their cattle according to age, sex, colouring, size and shape of horns, whether castrated or not, whether in calf or not. Knowledge of the extensive series of names used for these 'classes' of cattle was part of a herd-boy's A.B.C. By the time he was old enough to be told to drive certain cattle out of the kraal, designated by their class, he knew exactly which ones were meant. He could also use the cattle terminology to be precise in telling an owner about a beast which had strayed or one that had a sore hoof, or one that was giving an exceptionally good or poor flow of milk.

Herd-boys learned that cattle constituted a form of wealth, not only by the numbers a man possessed and could display, but also because they were easily realizable assets. Cattle could be sold to pay taxes, debts and court fines; and to pay men working for an Ngoni owner of cotton or tobacco gardens. They learned also that since cattle could be converted into money, the men of the house owning the cattle could use the money to buy cloth. This cloth, the property of the house, was kept and looked after by the senior women, who would lend it out temporarily to young men wishing to dress up smartly to go courting or go on a visit.

In the modern forms of Nyasaland economy it was a

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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money to buy herself clothes, if her husband has no money to give her.

In court, when a woman has to pay damages or a fine, she may be able to provide the money from her own resources. If not, she can turn to her husband or to her own kinsfolk. Provided damages for adultery are not involved, her husband, if he is not away working, ought to provide the money and a deliberate refusal to do so would precipitate a major quarrel and the possibility of divorce. If a woman gets into a fight at a party, and has to pay, say, half-a-crown to someone she has hurt, her husband ought to find the money for her. If he refuses to do so though she has no money of her own, the court will say that he no longer loves his wife, and is trying to find an opportunity to divorce her. Indeed, there would be little point in the husband refusing to pay, as those who cannot pay their fines are committed to prison, and he would then lose the services of his wife.

A woman can hold property in her own right and a husband honours a well-loved wife by giving her cattle. Gifts that she gets from her own kinsfolk do not pass to her husband, and such things as blankets and mats that she has used, even if her husband bought them, are regarded as her own property. Even the money that her husband gives her to make specific purchases is her own to do as she pleases with, so that a woman may forgo the skirt for which her husband has given her money and instead give it to her sister to buy something else. Husbands do not always like such actions, but they cannot do anything directly to prevent them. One of the ways in which a wife acquires livestock of her own is by buying animals with the money she gets from her husband for clothes. The produce of a wife's wet-season garden, maize, sorghum, millet, root crops, pulses, cucurbits, is in effect held in common by husband and wife, and neither ought to sell any of it without first consulting the other. On divorce the crops are divided between them unless the court decides that one party did not work in the garden, or has deserted the other. The money a woman earns by brewing beer for sale she usually keeps, although some men say that a woman should hand the money over to her husband, lest he find her with it and suspect that she has earned it by prostitution. In practice, most women seem to keep their own earnings and it is not uncommon, where the husband is a drunkard and weak-willed, for his wife to have custody of his money as well. Indeed the simultaneous operation within the husband-wife relationship of structural separation and social co-operation is well demonstrated by the apparently paradoxical situation, of which I saw two instances, in which a man ordered to pay damages to his wife for fighting her had to ask her to hand him over the money so that he could duly hand it back to her.

6. Mystical links

Symbolic expression of the relationship between man and wife is not greatly developed among the Ngoni, and the mystical bonds

rights at all. The payment of bridewealth had in the past enabled mutually related groups of kin to 'foresee the behaviour of one another in given situations since the payments evoke the behaviour'[1] but now the given situations were unlikely to occur. We may say then in this second phase poverty and uncertainty about the overall system of social relationships within which marriages would continue caused marriage payments to be low and, in some instances, non-existent.

The gradual increase in power of the Native Authority and the contemporaneous increased participation in the money economy have brought about further changes in the third phase, beginning round about 1930. In recent years the value of the legalization payment has increased and seems likely to increase further. This change is demonstrated in Table VII, although we must recall that the time classification in this table is by year of marriage, not year of payment. Similar increases have been noted among other Eastern Province tribes, notwithstanding cultural differences between them and the Ngoni. This increase has been possible because of the rise in wages and prices, but we cannot regard this as the sole cause. This simple hypothesis is ruled out by the simultaneous fall in bridewealth, as suggested by Table VI. While wages have risen, the rights associated with bridewealth have declined in importance and those associated with the legalization payment have remained significant. A high payment gives each particular marriage the mark of stability, yet at the same time the process which enables a young man to offer as much as £10 for his bride without appealing to his kinsmen for help has also made his expectation of life-long marriage with her less than it would have been thirty years ago, when he would have offered only 6s. Men earn money in Southern Rhodesia and the Copperbelt. They move freely between urban and rural environments, using the money to make large marriage payments in the villages. They stand on their own, do not call on their senior agnates for help, marry where they will, and settle with that headman whose village most attracts them or is most conveniently situated for siting a new shop. Yet if in this way they can free themselves from prescribed affiliation to a kin group, so can their children do the same. The former structural basis for stable marriage, the invariable affiliation of children to their agnatic group, has gone. There is as yet no system of law and morals, nor sufficient interest in inheritable property, to provide an alternative means of stablizing marriage. As among the Ila, high marriage payments accompany frequent divorce.

The hypothesis that increased frequency of divorce among the Ngoni is due mainly to the breakdown of their agnatic system may be supported by comparison with the Zulu and other Natal tribes. Here the old system, characterized by strong agnatic affiliation and

[1] *Ibid*, p. 172.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
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241 those who have not been working. Some people choose to do their
273 work in the garden on the day previous to the party, on the theory
476 that working and drinking do not go together. A few people offer
baskets of ground-nuts or other crops or meat in return for a day's
[465] labour, and monetary payments are also known.

Craftsmen

453 There are a number of specialized occupations which give rise to
inter-village trading. Pots are made by women. Some villages have no
523 potter and their inhabitants are dependent on pot-makers in neigh-
[462] bouring villages. Sometimes a woman may acquire a reputation for
pot-making sufficiently high to attract custom even from villages
where there are already pot-makers. Pots are sold in return for their
own volume of maize, or for money, or the customers may be required
to provide sufficient clay for twice the amount of pottery that they
wish to obtain.

285 Basketry is a man's craft, and at the end of the rainy season, when
[462] it is necessary to watch all day in the gardens for monkeys, men with
this skill spend their time at it. Baskets are sold for money or for maize,
and, as with pottery, there is a certain amount of inter-village sale.

759 Herbalists draw their clients from a wider area than do the pot- and
basket-makers, and their contacts with their patients are more intimate.
If a man falls sick, the remedies known in the family are tried first, but
if these are unsuccessful he may go to someone who is known for his
wide knowledge of medicines. Patients will travel up to 15 miles or
so to consult a herbalist, who may require them to live in his village
to receive treatment. Payment for medical treatment is sometimes
demanded part in advance, but other practitioners ask for a fee only
when a cure has been effected. Since the establishment of medical
[448] services by the Administration the way has been open for the medical
orderlies to operate in opposition to the herbalists, using misappro-
priated European drugs.

III. THE FAMILY

Principles of Descent

611 The Ngoni are traditionally a patrilineal patrilocal people paying
[591] bride-wealth with cattle. This tradition is reflected in modern prac-
583 tice only to a limited extent. Many of the men and women who were
[184] incorporated after Zwangendaba had crossed the Zambezi came from

10: Barnes E-S (1946-1949) 1959
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can live in the village and cultivate a garden. The maintenance of contacts is facilitated by the fairly general custom of work on the farms at the week-ends. Apart from two periods of tobacco slump, the local demand for labour has exceeded the supply ever since the earlier period of European settlement. As early as January 1900 the manager of the North Charterland Exploration Company complained to the Administration that the lack of local labour was very serious, and attributed this to the large number of people who were going away to work in Southern Rhodesia. This theme has been repeated over and over again ever since. The practical effect of this chronic local shortage of labour has been that work on the farms has always been a more easy-going affair than work away on the mines or in the big towns. Men have been able to absent themselves from work to attend to their affairs at home very much as they have pleased. Payment has been either for piece-work or for the number of days worked, so that at one time it was not unusual for a man to take two or three months to complete thirty days' work, for which he had contracted.

Prior to about 1930, there were a few villages located on farm-land, whose inhabitants undertook to work for so many days, with pay, in return for permission to remain on the land. With the completion of the move into reserves, this became rare, and at the present time the bulk of the people who live on farm-land are accommodated in compounds provided for them by the farmer. These people are the labourers on the farm for the time being, their families, and friends. The compound is under the charge of a foreman who is usually an employee of long standing on the farm. On some of the farms there are small gardens, but none of them, as far as I know, permit the keeping of cattle by the labourers. This means that a man with cattle must continue to keep them at home in his village or in the village of a relative. Cattle are still the principal form of investment, particularly for people who cannot spend their capital in building a brick house, so that it is common to find in a village that many of the cattle in the byre are being tended for the benefit of an absent owner who spends the majority of his time away on a farm and who may not even have a hut in the village.

The demand for labour on the tobacco farms varies considerably with the time of year, being greatest from about Christmas until about June. At the same time, the calls on a man to tend his own garden are greatest from about November until May. Farmers therefore try to get labour for a few days at a time from people who live in villages

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
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Labour Ordinances, he can only do so through the District Commissioner's court at Fort Jameson, which may take up more of his time than he thinks the matter worth. In consequence, few actions are brought by farmers against their African labourers and if a man breaks his contract and deserts, no action may be taken against him.

It is not surprising that the efficiency of labour operating under these conditions is low, and that the wages are also low. These two conditions react on one another, and it is misleading to regard the low wages as the only cause of the inefficiency, or the inefficiency as the only cause of the low wages. The practical effect is that men who wish to earn more money than they can get as labourers on the farms at 14*s.* a month with food go away to Southern Rhodesia. It must be observed, however, that men started going to Southern Rhodesia long before the tobacco farms were opened up to their present extent.

Labour Migration

Prior to the European conquest, the only men who had worked for Whites were those employed as carriers by the handful of travellers who passed through the country before 1896, and as carriers and labourers by the North Charterland Exploration Company from 1896 onwards. But immediately after the end of the fighting in 1898, recruiting started among the Ngoni for police work in Southern Rhodesia, and there has been a continual flow of labour migrants south ever since.

There have been considerable fluctuations in the number of men going south since that time, particularly during the two world wars, when the military requirements of the Territory exercised a greater claim. The latest figures for the Eastern Province as a whole show that, in 1946, 23 per cent. of the taxable males registered in the province were absent from the province. Another 17½ per cent. were at work within the province.[1] In May 1947, in two Ngoni counties with a combined total of 1,739 registered taxable males, it was found that 30 per cent. of them were at work in the Eastern Province and a further 42 per cent. were away elsewhere, a total of 72 per cent. away from their villages. Half of those living outside the Eastern Province were classified as 'lost', in that their present whereabouts were unknown to the people at home.[2] These figures exclude all men who have been 'lost' for more than five years.

[1] Labour Department, *Annual Report, 1946*, p. 12.
[2] These figures were given me by the District Commissioner, Fort Jameson.

342 /S cont'd/ with both bamboo and pole huts. The
[843] construction of the walls and roof is the work of men, while women are responsible for plastering walls, floor and verandah, and for collecting the grass for the roof. Pole huts are more often than not plastered on the outside as well as on the inside of the /S/ wall, and
[353] women like to make designs on them in plasters of different colour, with inscriptions and drawings.

The favourite time for hut building is from June to September,
[901] when there is comparatively little work to do in the gardens. A man may undertake the major part of the work himself, but if his wife is
[474] co-operative and brews beer, he will also get his friends to come and help him, as a working party. Perhaps fifteen or twenty people will come, the men cutting and carrying poles and fixing them in place, the women bringing grass for thatching. If many people attend, then the walls will be put up, and the thatching started, but if the friends are few, then the beer will be finished while the roof of the house is still not thatched, and the owner will have to finish the work himself. In any case, he will need to offer at a later date, either more beer,
[465] or salt, or meat, or sometimes money, to women to come and plaster the walls and floor. Building may however be an operation spread over many months, and if the work is started late in the season, the rains may come before the roof is on. In this case, the building may be left until the following year, when there is again time to spare for building, and good supplies of thatching grass are available. Alternatively, the owner may become discouraged, and use the poles for firewood. A well-built pole hut will last five years and a bamboo hut longer.

343 Storehouses are built of bamboo or of thick grass, and are sometimes plastered. They have a detachable roof that acts as a lid, and the whole construction is built on a plastered platform about two feet off the ground. Separate storehouses are used for each household
[592] and for different crops, maize, finger millet, kaffir-corn and ground-
[241] nuts. If a man has two maize gardens, he may keep the produce in separate storehouses. Unmarried and newlywed persons store with their parents. Storehouses last two or three years.